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ESAU.

“And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.”

Genesis, chapter xxxvii. ; verse 38.

So the day faded.

Then majestic Night
Stept down among the purple hills, and went
Lonely across the plain, until the white
Clouds rifted, and from out her starry tent
The pale moon slowly came ; while far away
The lingering day-star glanced through azure air,
Then sadly dropt to rest beyond the gray
Western horizon. Soon upon the fair
And silent highway of the heavens, each star
Appearing, took its place, and seem'd to glow
Brighter, as swarthy night moved o'er the far
Fields, where the cloud-dust, white as drifted snow
Glistered.

Down in the hazy distance, showers
 Of silvery moonlight, falling low, between
 The solitary hills and misty bowers,
 Gleam'd like the faintest rain-fall on the green
 Cool vine leaves, and athwart the lonely land ;—
 Where the tall palm trees waved their tufted crests
 High in the air, between the broad plain, and
 The barren desert :—and upon the breasts
 Of the still pools.

Calm as a hallowed hymn,
 Rising and swelling on a heavenly breeze,
 The soothing midnight wind, in tree tops dim
 Chanted its old and mystic litanies.
 Now, floating onward in one sad sweet strain,
 Like the strange murmur of grief-burdened men,
 Or dying slowly down, to rise again
 Stronger beneath the waning stars.—And then
 'Neath dusky cedars, moaning, sadly deep,
 Like muffled music of the trumpet roll
 That wakes the slumb'rer from life's haunted sleep
 Into the full light, ere the parting soul
 First sees the promised land. Or, lisping low
 Like a fair maiden whispering of love—
 In broken accents, dreamily and slow—
 To the mild moon and listening stars above.
 Or, like the ripple of a lazy stream
 Through woodlands filled with rarest harmony ;
 Or, like a wave-song, when white waters gleam
 Across far-spreading sands that fringe the sea
 'Neath amber-glowing cliffs.

Anon, the air
 Was broken by the night-hawk's dreary cry
 And by the lion, roaring in his lair
 Far hidden in the distance ; nearer, by

The tender bleating of the frightened sheep
Within the peaceful fold, while the mute moon
Look'd down on drowsy shepherds, wrapt in deep
And dreamy thought.

From the palm-shadows, soon
Came one, in form majestic ! On his brow
Stood beaded drops of sweat, and hot desire
Lurk'd in his restless heart. His dark eyes now
Half sadly drooped ; then gleaming with the fire
Of keen-edged wrath, glanced quickly o'er the plain ;
Or upward look'd, as if imploring all
The stars for help :—or swiftly once again
Seeking the earth, found rest below the tall
And stately trees.

Across his shoulders, hung
His idle bow, and from his brawny breast,
The lion's tawny hide was loosely flung
Backward, in the great heat of that unrest,
Which madly burned within his throbbing veins,
Until his massive frame swayed to and fro
Like a fierce tiger, furious in the chains
That hold him servile to his human foe.
His bosom heaved, with strong tumultuous sighs ;
His face now reddened, now grew deathly white,
And from his hot wet lips, in quick surprise,
Came barbèd arrows of a trampled right.

“Ay ! Right and Wrong !” he cried ; “O God, must I
For ever serve him ? What, for ever ? Long
As yon white stars shall roll across the sky,
And the impassive moon, that now among
The happy clouds, moves on her silvery way,
Heedless of me, of mine, and of the dark
Hereafter that awaits my race ?

Away

Fond visions of the future ! O the mark
Of servitude is mine, ay, mine by right—
If such a wrong must now accounted, be
The heaven-sent gift of right !

O Lord, the light,

The morning glory, that so tenderly
Illumed life's pathway with its roseate hue,
Hath fled ; and like the gloomy mists, that roll
Around the hill-tops, ere in yonder blue
The sun appeareth ; so my weary soul
Is shadowed by the blackened clouds of woe
That shall for ever compass me about,
Like God's left hand laid on me, ere I know
Or feel His presence.

O ! must I go out

To meet the morrow, like a poor blind fool,
Left to the mercy of his fellows ? Left
To the guiding hand of him, the tool
Of a too-hasty mother ?

O ! bereft

Of birth-right and of blessing, Lord, must I
The twice-supplanted, henceforth be the scorn
Of Jacob and my people ? Shall I die
Forgotten and despised ?

Ah me ! fair morn

Now waiting far beyond the eastern hills,
With cold usurping smiles, to wrest the right
Of sovereignty, of wondrous power, that fills
The dreamy kingdom of imperial Night,
And sit upon Heaven's throne ; hath never read
The love of king-craft half so well as he
Hath learned deception, while his humble head
Was pillowed on a subtle mother's knee !"

"Faith, faith in God ! O mother, where was thine,
 When hasty action fain would quicker bring
 The end, the promised blessing, the divine
 Pre-ordered gift of God ? Ay, could I fling
 Thy faith in him, and all thy love for me
 Thy first-born, all thy patience, and thy good
 Intent ; with all thy haste and subtlety,
 Into a balance :—sure and swiftly would
 The trusty scale with all its weight swerve round,
 Then fall in favour of thy cunning deeds,
 In which no heart nor honour could be found :
 In favour of divided love, that breeds
 Hatred and jealousy on this fair earth
 And would sow strife in heaven !"

"O right of birth
 Which hunger madly prompted me to sell,
 I should have died and kept it ! Now, I fain
 Would give my very life's blood, knowing well
 That in the dying throe, I must regain
 Lost birthright and lost blessing ! Ah ! too weak
 Am I for words, too weak, too weak for strife !
 For words that in my anger I would speak ;
 For steady hand to take his hated life !"

"Close, close O parted lips ! Wait, wait weak hand !
 He is my brother, and the honored one,
 Whose children shall possess the promised land ;—
 From whom a line of kings and priests shall run :—
 Therefore I dare not touch him, but must stay
 My hasty hand, must put my wrath away."

"O Jacob ! O my mother ! I forgive,
 But never can blot out the wrong that ye
 Wrought in my absence. For I now must live
 A life of servitude, that e'er shall be

Attended by the sword, on which is thrown
 A sheath of promises ! For, henceforth, I
 Accursed and hated, must go forth alone,
 To live unblest, perchance unblest to die !”

The voice of Esau trembled as he spake ;
 And quickly from his eyes, in that lone place
 Fell secret tears, that hastily did shake
 Their briny torrents down his rugged face,
 And rain'd upon his garments and the ground :
 His wounded heart was over-full of woe,
 But in that sorrow, e'en his spirit found
 Brief rest in tears, and peace in hope, although
 That hope loom'd faintly through despair's dark cloud
 Which o'er his head in vengeance seem'd to lower !
 And thus out-witted Esau mourned aloud
 In the strange silence of the midnight hour :
 “ O, ere the morrow, let my wrath go down,
 And in my anguish, let me now confess
 My secret to the winds ; and let my frown
 Die, leaving smiles ! Perchance the Lord will bless
Them, if not me !

O ! Jacob, in my rage
 I could have killed thee ; but, the voice of Him
 Who watched the long and weary pilgrimage
 Of Abraham and Isaac, through the dim
 Land of Moriah, upward to the mount,
 And stayed the father's earnest hand ; the Voice
 That comforted lone Hagar by the fount,
 That made the friendless wanderer rejoice,
 And from the wilderness return, called me.
 I heard It, and my anger cooled until
 My sinful soul knew what He said, must be,
 And though unblest, I bowed unto His will !”

But ere the pale day crept up the purple sky,
 He raised his head, he swept his tears away,
 And all his strength went forth in one wild cry,
 A wilder cry than that, which in the day
 Rang out the first-born's woe. And thus he spake:—
 "God of my Father's! Jacob's God and Mine!
 Surely Thou wilt not in Thine anger break
 My spirit with despair! O Thou divine
 Jehovah, Master, grant thy servant peace,
 Heaven's everlasting peace, O Lord, and rest,
 I humbly pray thee; and, when life shall cease
 Give my soul guerdon, though I die unblest!"

He prayed between the darkness and the light,
 And ere the pale moon withered in the west,
 And ere the fading stars dropt out of sight;
 God's promise dawn'd upon his soul's dark night!

MARIE TREVELYAN.

ENGLISH POETS.

ROBERT WILLIAMS BUCHANAN.

Macaulay, as everybody knows, held the theory that it was almost impossible that poetry could exist alongside science, mechanical appliances, and all the other prosaic adjuncts of modern life. Fortunately the *dicta* of great men do not always settle questionable points, and though the great historian may have been right in some senses, his sweeping declaration that science and progress, art and commerce, were natural enemies to the "mystic nine," must be received *cum grano salis*. Notwithstanding all these disadvantages—if they really may be considered so—the Victoria era, one, by the way, more distinguished than any of its predecessors for prosiness and

utilitarianism, poetry has flourished to a far greater extent than at any time since the close of the Elizabethan epoch. It is true that severe and captious critics may say its quality has degenerated—that is a question open to argument—and that modern poets have neither the force nor the spontaneity of the old singers—which, as a general statement, may be admitted—but there remains the broad fact, that not only have the old masters of song been more extensively read in these days than in any that preceded them, and that surely says something, and yet the contemporary poets have, by all accounts, projected and exploited regions never before thought to be within the pale of poetic treatment.

The real truth, as it seems to me, is that the ideas as to the poetical field have undergone a radical change within a very few years. We all know that, prior to Wordsworth, no poet ever conjectured that out of common life, and every-day experience, poetry was to be extracted. Many still alive can remember the virulence with which some of his lyrics and idylls were assailed—and most of these were cast in the mould that was then altogether novel. But since then Tennyson has written. Keats has produced several poems that are now received as masterpieces in their way. Browning has traversed lands hitherto untouched; and the whole of the late American poets have opened veins that were generally conceived to contain nothing but the utterest prose. That Macaulay, after stirring the heart of the nation by “lays” that belonged to an extinct race, and an almost fossilized condition of events, should have fallen into the easily exploded error is difficult to understand; but it is quite certain that he was judging *ex cathedra* when he made the statement, and that if his real opinion had been sounded, he would have recognised the possibility of poetry in all ages.

After all, the Victorian era has been richer in this special department of literature than any since the reign of Queen Anne; and this is universally recognised as an *interregnum*. Why, then, should it be said that the comprehension of poetry grows dull, or that the power of producing it is extinct?

Charles Dickens may be a writer of prose, but in this form he had contributed poems to the English language. Tom Hood was a jokester, and yet his finest efforts were exercised on behalf of classes which were not only considered "outside the pale of practical poetry"—to travesty a recent political phrase—but beneath the notice of practical men. Did not Mrs. Motherwell do as much for the ordinary life of the Scotch lowlander, "the Corn Law poet" the same for working men's grievances, the Jacobins of Ireland for their ancient prejudices, and the writers of *vers de société* for the inanities of the drawing room? The truth is that the *venue* has changed. It was thought aforetime that the tragic, the sublime, the wonderful, and the heroic offered the only outlets for poetic genius. Wordsworth discovered that—

"The meanest flower that blows
Has thoughts for me that lie too deep for tears."

and some of his successors have found poetry in tracks which even he would have scorned to tread.

Among these may be instanced the poet whose name stands at the head of this article. He has found "the element divine" even in the criminal class of society, and has discovered the poetic feeling at the foot of the scaffold, in a nature from its infancy inured to the worst forms of human vice. On this account he has been called "Sonnetteer of the gutter," and a great many other opprobrious names, just as every man has been who has ever left the beaten track of contemporaneous respectability, or who has dug a mine in strata which the critics declared contained no ore. However, he has lived long enough, and written books enough to confound even these captious gentlemen, and gained for himself a reputation among lovers of song which will outlast him at least as long as the memory of Hamlet's father, if indeed he be not one of those immortals who defy all time and all changes. William Wordsworth was so descried at the beginning of this century, but since then he has sprung into the front rank of English singers, and by universal acclaim ought to have been there from the first. It

is thus that contemporary judgments are rectified and revised by succeeding generations who possess calmer perception and are free from the prejudice which caused the original obliquity.

Nor did Buchanan escape the ridicule which generally assails the new-fledged singer. Some twenty years ago or more a pitiful scribe in a very small publication—so far as literary merit is concerned—an organ called *The Press* said of him: "In the monotonous dulness of his blank verse there is nothing noticeable, except occasionally a most poetical vulgarity. But when he comes to rhyme Mr. Buchanan is infinitely silly, without the excuse of being musical." That any dullard should have received credit for such a remark just shows the depth of literary degradation into which the professional critic has fallen in these latter days. This was said of the book called "Undertones," in which there occurred, among other gems, "Pygmalion,"—"Iris the Rainbow,"—and many pieces which have since been all but universally recognized as among the best things that one of the three greatest living poets has ever written. Where could the eyes of such a critic have been—if, indeed, he had eyes at all—when he damned a man of genius in view of such a passage as this, instinct with poetic feeling, felicitous in expression, rich in metaphor, gleaming with "the light that never was on sea or land;" and describing in glowing terms the conception and birth of the Rainbow:

Thence with drooping wings bedew'd,
 Folded close about my form,
 I alight with feet unview'd
 On the ledges of the storm;
 For a moment, cloud-enroll'd
 'Mid the murm'rous rain I stand
 And with meteor eyes behold
 Vapoury ocean, misty land;
 Till the thought of Zeus outsprings
 From my ripe mouth with a sigh,
 And unto my lips it clings
 Lik a shining butterfly.

When I brighten, gleam, and glow,
 And my glittering wings unfurl,
 And the melting colours flow
 To my foot of dusky pearl;
 And the ocean mile on mile
 Gleams thro' capes, and straits and bays,
 And the vales and mountains smile,
 And the leaves are wet with rays,—
 While I wave the humid bow
 Of my wings with flash of fire,
 And the tempest, crouched below,
 Knows the thought of Zeus, the sire.

Fiercely, however, as he was assailed on his first appearance, his onward progress has been obstructed in equal virulence ever since, and quite recently a brother poet—a man whose genius none of sense or literary culture denies—has cast mud enough upon him to show anybody that poets, after all, are human, and that the feuds which we know to have existed in the past, through sheer jealousy, that the “Divine gift” had been given to two beings who trod the earth at the same period, follow the same law of recurrence as all facts. This process of vilification was repeated in open court by a lawyer who enjoys a large practice, and a loud reputation upon, apparently, a very slender basis, and the man who had endeavoured—almost for the first time since Milton—“to justify the ways of God and man,” was called brother to the “fleshly school” after having written “The Book of Orm,” and such a sonnet as the twenty-seventh in the tale of those produced by the shores of Cornish, which I give below:—

O sing clear brook, sing on, while in a dream
 I feel the sweetness of the years go by!
 The crags and peaks are softened now, and seem
 Gently to sleep against the gentle sky;
 Old scenes and faces glimmer up and die,
 With outlines of sweet thought obscured too long;
 Like boys that shout at play far voices cry;

O sing! for I am weeping at the song,
 I know not what I am, but only know
 I have had glimpses tongue may never speak;
 No more I balance human joy and woe,
 But think of my transgressions, and am meek.
 Father forgive the child who fretted so,—
 His proud heart yields!—the tears are on his cheek!

In spite of all opposition, however, Robert Williams Buchanan has gone on his shining way, created a world of admirers, and left "foot prints on the sands of Time" far above high-water mark, and not, therefore, to be obliterated by those literary or legal Canutes who would fain command the sea. Let any one read the following "Nuptial Song," and, after thinking calmly over its real intent, say upon how slender a basis all this vilification rests. I quote it because Mr. Hawkins made much of it in the recent trial at Westminster, and do so, well-assured, that the discerning lover of poetry will see in it what legal acumen could never discover. *Quidnon mortalia pectora cogis, auri sacra fames:*

Where were they wedded? In no temple of ice
 Built up by human fingers;
 The floor was strewn with flowers of fair device,
 The wood-birds were their singers.

Who was the Priest? The priest was the still Soul
 Calm, gentle, and low-spoken,
 And read the running brooklet like a scroll,
 And trembled at the token.

What was the service? 'Twas the service read
 When Adam's living faith was plighted!
 The tongue was silent, but the lips rose-red
 In silence were united.

Who saw it done? The million starry eyes
 Of one ecstatic heaven.

Who shared the joys? The flowers, the trees, the skies,
 Thrill'd in each kiss was given.

Who was the bride ? A spirit strong and true,
 Beauteous to human seeing ;
 Soft elements of flesh, air, fire, and dew
 Blent in one rose of being.

What was her consecration ? Innocence,
 Pure as the wood-tones round her.
 Nothing she knew of rites—the strength intense
 Of God and nature found her.

As freely as maids give a lock away,
 She gave herself unto him.
 What was the bridegroom ? Clay, and common clay,
 Yet the wild joy slept thro' him.

Hymen, O Hymen ! by the birds was shed
 A matrimonial cadence.

Da nuces ! Squirrels strew'd the nuts instead
 Instead of rosy youths and maidens.

Eureka, yea, Eureka was to blame ;
 He was an erring creature ;
 Uncivilized by one wild flush of shame
 He waver'd back on nature.

He kissed her lips, he drank her breath in bliss,
 He drew her to his bosom :
 As the clod kindles at the Spring's first kiss,
 His beauty burst to blossom.

Who rung the bells ? The breeze, the merry breeze,
 Set all in bright vibration ;
 Clear, sweet, yet low, there trembled thro' the trees,
 The nuptial jubilation.

That was called sensual. Sensuous it may be, and no doubt is, but what true poetry is not ? I could quote pages of the purest singers that ever breathed which, judged by the same narrow canon of criticism, would bear the same "nice comment." Nay, I will just give another lyric of Buchanan's—which the most prudish purist cannot twist into "fleshliness," and,

yet, had the keen advocate thought of it, he might with equal truth have cited it as evidence of the proposition he sought to lay down. It is called "Fire and Water; or, a Voice of the Flesh."

Two white arms, a moss pillow,
A curtain of green :
Come love me, love me,
Come clasp me unseen !

As red as a rose is,
I saw her arise,
Fresh waked from reposes,
With wild dreamy eyes.

I sprang to her, clasp'd her
I trembled, I prest,
I drank her warm kisses,
And kissed her white breast.

With ripple of laughter,
A dazzle of spray,
She melted, she melted,
And glimmer'd away.

Down my breast runs the water,
In my breast burns the fire,
My face is like crimson
With shame and desire.

Posterity will read these exquisite poems in their true light, and then men will wonder how such things were said of them. I can quite understand that "Venus and Adonis" in an age when the moral tone of society was low and coarse would rouse the basest passions—though the poet in writing it never intended that to be the result—and yet in an epoch that is healthful, allusions which would fire emasculation, warm without kindling, and rouse without waking desire. After all a poem is vile or pure according to the taste and nature of the reader.

Most people have seen the picture—or at least an engraving of it—where the old lady says to her husband “Come along! do,” and can understand that the contemplation of sculpture does not necessarily involve what she thought it did. The reproof of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to the young lady who blushed at the figure of Apollo in one of the famous galleries in Rome confirms my view, and if I wanted further proof of the same thing I might quote the anecdote that is told of the famous English lexicographer. A lady came to him one day, and complimented him for having kept out of his dictionary “all the naughty words.” “I thank you, madam,” retorted the Doctor, “but I am sorry to see that you have been looking for them.”

GOOD BYE.

You meet me heavy-hearted,
 My hand you tightly clasp;
 I know it all—say nothing,
 There's language in your grasp.

There's “farewell” on your lips, love,
 And in your filling eye
 A torrent of “God bless you”—
 You need not *say* “Good bye.”

Your tongue rebels, and voiceless
 You look your cruel quest:
 You seek me and to tell me—
 Enough! I feel the rest.

Not ours to change our fortunes,
 Shun sorrow clutch at bliss,
 But strength of will is left us,
 To conquer grief like this.

Then speak not of the sadness
With which our hearts are vexed,
Let's lose to-day nor count it;
When are you coming next?

Grieve not these last few moments;
Leave grief until we part;
Forget the lonely throbbings
Time beats out in each heart.

Quick, look beyond the present
Nor stop for useless sighs;
In brooding o'er a sorrow
The gist of sorrow lies.

In fancying a pleasure
We joy in future bliss
Create an actual blessing
Of what may prove amiss.

Then whisper whilst I listen
The fondly foolish things
Which to the heart make music,—
Love, happy, always sings.

I will not bear with murmur,
I will not hear regret
I only know the pleasures
With which our love's beset.

I'll leave all frowning aspect
For future days, for while
You're near to kiss, and bless them
My lips can only smile.

Shall you come back when twilight
Steals all the light away,
Or shall you wait till evening
Enshrouds the lifeless day?

And shall I watch your coming,
Or listening wait instead ?
I need nor eyes, nor ears, love,
To recognize your tread.

Or shall you come when morning,
Awakes with glad surprise,
To find the world re-brightened
With beams from Paradise ?

And shall I, sleeping, suffer
In dreams, sad dreams' alarms,
Then rousing from my slumbers
Be folded in your arms ?

Or what shall I be doing
When you come to the gate—
Shall I sing a song of welcome,
Or shall I simply wait ?

Wait with impatient fingers
Wait with impatient feet
Wait with fond love's impatience
Which cannot be discreet

With hands that clutch at nothing
With foot that taps with haste—
There's nothing so impatient
As a woman eager-faced.

What color shall I wear then ?
I'll try each varied hue—
Select, then change—don't blame me—
I'm only vain for you.

What wonder if a woman,
Who love's as women dare,
Desires *one* man should find her
More than all others, fair !

How shall we kiss at greeting ?
Just tell me what you'll say—
For while we seek the sunbeams
We chase the clouds away.

A tell-tale ray of sunshine
Has come across your face,
Bright beams you see can halo
Joy, sun—a sad embrace.

You leave with fond words ringing,
Fresh hopes within your ears ;
Your heart's not crushed with wailings,
Nor courage dashed with tears.

I, left alone, can ponder
Through all the time you roam,
Not on a mournful parting
But on a coming home.

So fancy healeth wounds, love,
So hope destroys despair
So pleasure pain assuages—
Contentment killeth care :

So future good may aid us,
Though sorrow presseth nigh,
If we count upon the meetings
When hearts must say " Good bye."

AGNES STONEHEWER.

A QUARTETTE OF SONNETS.

I.—A YEAR.

I have not seen you now for days. Perchance
A year will pass ere I may clasp your hand,
Ere, in my Earthly Paradise I stand;
Amid the Autumn leaflets mournful dance
The chastened sunbeam shall bring back your glance;
And when the Winter snow-flakes veil the land
Your spirit's whiteness I shall understand;
The Spring-tide, with its free and sweet joyance,
My wintry discontent shall gladly break;
The birds and flowers will herald in the Spring,
And hope shall once more in my heart awake;
"Summer's near," ere long the birds will sing;
To their glad strain my heart shall answer make;
Summer to you my restless feet shall bring.

II.—ON THE SHORE.

I wander on the shingle, while the stars
With ceaseless palpitations overhead,
Their silent glimmer upon all things shed;
And slowly rising now, in silver bars
The moon breaks o'er the sea; ere ruddy Mars
Grows pale before her. Lo, my feet are staid;
Is this a gem, that lies beneath my tread;
A ruby redder than the wine of wars;
A purer pearl than decks a coronet;
A diamond richer than a victor's prize?
Here in its sea-lashed bed it sleeps apart.
With ceaseless haste, the busy crowd forget
The jewels in their path. Unseen it lies,
Henceforth I wear it, ever on my heart.

III.—LAUS VENERIS.

Sad as the sighing winds amid the reeds ;
 Sweet as the breathing of a flute-player,
 Or as the scent when hidden rose-buds stir ;
 Humble as flowerets, sprung from violet seeds ;
 Meek as a pale nun telling o'er her beads,
 Pure as the spirit in the heart of her ;
 Soft as the silence in the twilight air ;
 Steadfast as one who for his country bleeds ;
 Strong as a heart that passion cannot break ;
 Tender as music heard at evensong ;
 Hopeful as martyr's spirit at the stake ;
 Triumphant as the souls that God's Courts throng ;—
 Can love like this be crushed beneath the feet ?
 Trample it hard, its perfume is more sweet.

IV.—PURE LOVE.

"I cannot live without you." This, the moan
 Of all that ever sung, shall I repeat ?
 No. Though my heart-throbs ever wildly beat
 At your approach ; though holy seed is sown
 In my heart's wilderness by you alone ;
 Yet I could surely, nobly plant my feet
 In this my path ; yet I could still make sweet
 This life, uncared-for, desolate, unknown ;
 If I were sure that one day on my brow
 Your gracious head should lovingly be laid,
 When strength no longer mighty is to save ;
 That at the last your golden head should bow
 To catch the lost sound that my faint lips made,
 Or breathe a prayer for my sake o'er my grave.

WERTHER.

PARTED.

An empty place in the world below,
So little and yet so great;
And I, who have loved my darling so,
Can only weep—and wait.
It seems so little, it means so much,
It makes my sad heart ache;
Though I know the gifts of God are such,
They are His to give—and take.
I gaze on eyes that give back no glance;
My own seem blind and dim;
I kiss the gold of the shrouding hair,
The brow so pure of sin.
Oh, why should I weep? Her work is done;
Her heart has found its rest.
Yet the world is weary to tread alone,
I cannot think it best!
Not yet—not yet, while my tears flow on
As though they would never cease,
For I only think of my darling—gone,
And pray for a like release.

RITA.

GOLDEN CHAINS.*

It only is remembrance now—
And seems but yester day,
The sky was sapphire overhead,
The lark poured forth its lay;
The hawthorn snow was falling fast
Upon the woodland plains;
The lilac shed a sweet perfume;
We gathered golden chains.

* The Laburnum is known by this name in some of the Southern Counties in England.

And while it was so fair below,
And fairer yet above,
Beneath the old laburnum tree
He told me of his love ;
So, when I whispered mine, he gave
Just fresh with sun and rains
The lovely blossom overhead,
A bunch of golden chains.

But then he went to seek his fate,
Within a distant land ;
And oh ! how I have longed for words,
From " India's coral strand ;"
They came, but not a thought of me
His fickle heart retains ;
He married for the hope of wealth,
Bound, bound in golden chains.

The peace which passeth knowledge, now
Has brought my spirit rest,
As I look backward through the years,
Assured that it was best
For me ; and I can pray for him,
And, if the world regains
Its former claim, I think of this,
And withered golden chains.

I long to live within the shade
Of all embracing love,
I trust that my affections may
Be set on things above ;
Yet, sometimes when the rainbow melts
Mid April beams and rains,
The passing zephyr seems to sigh,
And whispers " Golden Chains."

EDIRA.

DAYBREAK AT SEA.

Like a beautiful eye from slumber breaking,
The sky 'neath the mantle of morn is waking,
And like the heave of some bosom distress,
The Ocean swells its billowy breast ;
And over the sea and beyond the shore,
Dim clouds are swept with a sullen roar,
By the break of morn ! And behold arise
Bright gleams of day in yon Eastern skies !

J. S. THOMPSON.

WAR.

They tell us that earth, in its first glad hour,
Was all one pure, one sunny bower ;
They tell us that all was balmy and bright,
The breath of morn, and the soft moonlight ;
That the glorious earth and the splendid sky,
Were soft as the light of a woman's eye,
When the form that her soul adores is nigh !
Look at it now ! alas, there is not,
On its gory disk, one sunny spot
Where guilt and blood, and shame and sin,
With pain and misery, have not been !
From the trembling earth to the shuddering sky,
'Mounts up one piercing and bitter cry,
Proclaiming aloud, both near and far,
The blood-stained curse of horrible war !

J. S. THOMPSON.

"SO DEAR, MY LOVE."

So dear, my love—so full of charms ;
I wonder still
Which charm it was first bound me slave
To her sweet will !
Where'er she walks, love's flowers spring up
To mark her way,
Reflecting back new beauty on her
Day by day.
Why waken love in all, you ask ?
Have you not seen
The spring-flowers ope again to greet
The sun's warm beam ;
Drawn by its potent charms, they wake
To earth once more ;
And from the colour of its rays
Their beauty draw ;
We cannot see them ope, nor rise
From out the ground,
Nor see them colour'd, yet we own them
Fair when found ;
Have you not stood beneath the moon
And seen the mist
Rise up to greet her from the earth,
And yet you wist
Not how 'tis done ? You only see
That it is so ;
And raising wilder'd glance to Heaven,
In wonder go.
So who can tell us how the rain
Was drawn from earth.
Or how the mighty heav'ns above
Did give it birth.
All that we know is, that it did
Descend again,
Refreshing by its cooling droops
Pasture and plain.

So with my love, the hidden flow'rs
Of nature rise,
And at her touch some latent good
Mounts to the skies.
So as the moon, she draws the mists
From off sad hearts,
And from the well-springs of her soul
Fresh joy imparts,
And she from time-sear'd sadden'd minds
Draws off the rain
Of blessings, that upon her head
Descend again.
So is it, aye, "a thing of beauty"
Faiileth never,
To gain its homage meet it "is
A joy for ever;"
Yet never are we nearer to
The how and why,
We only know it shall be so
Till ages die,
And are content to brave it here,
And let it be
Another link to life's long chain
Of mystery.

OLIVE FAIRLEIGH.

SOUL VOICES.

When the shadows are decreeing,
That the span of day is done ;
Trembling down the chords of being,
Melodies mysterious run.
Voices softly low and gentle,
Only heard when all is still,
Through the haunted chambers mental,
Murmur like a bubbling rill.

Some are joyous, gay and merry,
Telling us of brighter days,
And through gloom and darkness, ferry
Us with light and gladsome lays.
Some, of distant scenes remind us,
Vanished forms, and moments fleet,
Hours of happiness that bind us
To the Past, so sadly sweet.

Some, of home and childhood stealing,
Down the avenue of years,
Wake a loftier, purer feeling,
Though they fill the eyes with tears.
Voices too, all hushed and softened,
Hear we from the far-off land,
And the lives that death has orphaned,
Cannot these sweet tones withstand.

For they mingle with the deeper,
Graver, sterner notes that roll
Anthem-like to wake the sleeper,
Through the portals of the soul.
Swelling into louder chorus,
As the weary years go by,
Thundering in tones sonorous,
Warning that we, too, must die.

So the inner deep of being,
Pregnant is with mystic sounds,
All diverse, yet all agreeing,
In the music that resounds
Like the murmur of the ocean,
From the hearts that watch and wait,
Till their restless stir and motion,
Full perfection, shall abate.

A. W. P. ALLAN.

STUDIES IN POETRY.

CHAPTER VI (CONCLUSION).

Alliteration.—Rhyme defined.—Its Origin.—Various kinds of Rhymes.—Specimens.—Assonance.—Bysshe's Advice to Versifiers.—Present State of English Poetry.—Conclusion.

Alliteration may be defined as a sequence of words beginning with the same letter, as "Behemoth biggest born," or as in Pope's memorable line, where he admirably illustrates his subject, concerning "apt alliteration's artful aid." Alliteration, as Hood sensibly remarks, is a means not an end. So long as alliterative verse pleases the ear, and yet does not betray to its reader the cause of this pleasant sensation* it is an admirable addition to the beauty of the verse. But as soon as it attracts the reader's attention as a *tour de force*, it is a blot, because it inflicts an injury on the poem by engaging the mind on the machinery instead of on the matter. Instead of thinking how exquisite the poem is, we are wondering how often that clever contortionist, the poet, will fling his sommersault of alliteration. Even in Poe's poems† and in those of Mr. Swinburne the artifice is occasionally overdone. Manifest verbal tricks certainly spoil verse of whatever excellent quality otherwise. In the volume entitled *Poems and Ballads*, by Mr. Swinburne, there are many fine examples of the fascinating effect of alliteration in exalting the verse, and intensifying the music, and touching the quickest sensibility of the cultivated reader.

*What Pope finely calls "artless art."

†Edgar A. Poe (as in the famous *Raven*). But I take this allowable opportunity respectfully to commend the edition of Poe's Poetical Works, with prefatory memoir and essay by my lamented friend, that kind gentleman and brilliant writer, the late James Hannay, whose Essays, too, rank among the best we possess. Poe is a specimen of high literary genius too sadly yielding to the light which led astray; but the fact remains, the only one concerning editors and critics, that Poe was a true poet. For his errors he was accountable only to his Maker. He was, in some eminent respects, the Richard Savage of America.

In the *Songs before Sunrise*, again, the artifice, previously used so as to become too facile a habit, is, we venture to think frequently too apparent. But Mr. Swinburne is a genius, a gifted bard if ever there was one, and for power of versification and various melody, certainly the best poet of our day—by many millions of miles. Certain of his notions, equally in politics and in religion are eccentric in themselves, alien from the general sympathies and the holier regards of mankind; nevertheless, let us be thankful for what we have got, for the thousand and one splendid things abounding in liberal profusion in his cultured and magnificent pages. But, as it is almost superfluous to remark, his obedient disciples—the very mannikins of his lofty muse—have, as is usual with all imitators, exaggerated his defects, while of necessity avoiding any solitary flush of kindred genius. It is wholly unnecessary to mention names; it might needlessly annoy a small body of conceited and very juvenile gentlemen, of whose names moreover, outside their little clique, the general public is healthily and happily ignorant of. *Alliteration gone mad was their prevalent external characteristic.

I have mentioned in a former paper that the old Norse poetry was regulated by alliteration. This was the poetry of the old Scalds and Vikings who swept over Europe from the Baltic to the Seine—of our Anglo Saxons, who, in the main, were the progenitors of the mass of the English people. We will give, as a little literary curiosity, the song of the elder Caedmon "On the Origin of things" (preserved in Alfred's translation of Bede's Ecclesiastical History) which is one of the very few specimens now remaining of the Saxon of the earliest period.†

*From 1868 onwards the worse than Egyptian plague of Swinburnian poetasters raged furiously. Scarcely a week elapsed without some poem, composite of audacity, small learning, comical affectation, juvenile and beardless blasphemy, and abundant alliteration. It is abating now.

†Conybeare (Illust. p. 36) gives the year 670 as its date. I have transcribed both poem and translation from the Pictorial History of England, London, 1849, Vol. I, p. 293. I presume the literary section of this work was contributed by the late Professor Craik, of Queen's College, Belfast. He died in 1866.

Nu we sceolan herian
 Heofon-rices weard
 Metodes mihte
 And his mod gethone
 Werd wuldor fœder
 Swa he wundra gehwœs.
 Ece drihten
 Oord onstealde
 He œrest gesceop.
 Eorþan hearnum
 Heofon to hrofe
 Halig scyppend
 Tha middangeard
 Moncynnes weard.
 Ece dryhten
 Æfter teode
 Firum foldan,
 Frea ælmihtig

Now must we praise
 The Guardian of heaven's kingdom,
 The Creator's might,
 And his mind's thought;
 Glorious father of men!
 As of every wonder he
 Lord eternal,
 Formed the beginning.
 He first framed
 For the children of earth
 The heaven as a roof;
 Holy Creator!
 Then mid earth
 The Guardian of mankind,
 The eternal Lord
 Afterwards produced
 The earth for men,
 Lord Almighty!

Hear a reader may note simple piety, and also the origin of many of our present English words (now, heaven, might, father, wonder, erst, earth, holy, ward, etc., etc.) and also, though this may require a little practice, the measure by alliteration.*

Perfect *Rhyme* arises from the identity of sound with which different words terminate: the identity not the similarity. Johnson derives the word from the Greek *rhythmos*; but it must be observed that the Greek and Latin poets used the word to denote the metrical march or arrangement of syllables, and not at any time in the meaning of our modern rhymes. Rhyme was unknown to the ancients. As an accompaniment of verse, rhyme cannot be traced further back among European nations than to the rymours of Normandy, the troubadours of

* Several of the old Sages have lately been translated with loving care by Mr. William Morris, the poet. Of the Saxon poem *Beowulf*, Mr. Arnold has just produced an edition. The study of Saxon antiquities and literature, which may be said to have originated with the present century, has been wonderfully accelerated in recent years.

Provence,* the minnesingers of Germany, and the monks, who after the fall of the Roman Empire, added rhyming terminations to the Latin metres, which were chanted or sung in the services of the Church. *Leonine* verses, a kind much in fashion in the middle age, consist properly of the hexameter and pentameter, rhymed. We find in the ancient hymns of the Roman Church the rhythm of modern versifications :

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus,
Quem praeconum rogaturus,
Cum vix justus sit securus !

or, again in the famous drinking song ascribed to Walter Mapes, the too jovial Archdeacon of Oxford, in the time of Henry the Second :

Mihi est propositum in taberna mori,
Vinum sit appositum morientis ori,
Ut dicant, cum venerint Angelorum chori,
Deus sit propitius huic potatori.

The Roman Church employed rhyme—that monkish jingle as a poet of a new school once called it—with lofty and imposing effect in the most imposing of her services. Who has not felt the beauty of the *Stabat Mater*? The best of these hymns, which are well worth perusing on many important grounds,

* The reader may turn to Sir W. Scott's Song of Blondel (the Lay of the Bloody Vest) and the conversation between the minstrel and the master whom he loved, our crusading Richard Verse. See *The Talisman*, chapter xxvi. Professing to imitate the manner of the mediæval minstrel, Sir Walter gives us a fine specimen of fine galloping rhymes :

'Twas near the fair city of Benevent,
When the sun was setting on bow and bent,
And Knights were preparing in bower and tent,
On the eve of the Baptist's tournament ;
When in Lincoln green a stripling gent,
Well seeming a page by a Princess sent
Wander'd the camp, and, still as he went,
Enquir'd for the Englishman, Thomas à Kent,
And so on for two Fyttes.

Our present school of "advanced" poets would no doubt sternly condemn such, facile swinging lines : but they go gaily and they please the ear ; and alas ! one certainly cannot say that of quite all their curious productions.

have been collected and edited in a neat volume by the accomplished Dr. Newman.* Nor need any stern reviewer scent Popery here; for I speak as a man of letters writing in a literary magazine.

Perfect rhymes, according to the lucid exposition of the subject in the *English Cyclopædia* (to which I am greatly indebted, in this and the ensuing paragraphs) arise from the identity of sound, with which different words terminate. In monosyllables, or words which have the accent on the last syllable, in order to constitute *a perfect rhyme it is necessary that the sound of the last accented vowel, and of any letters which may follow it shall be exactly the same as those of the word with which it rhymes*. The sounds which precede the last accented vowel must be different in the two words. The spelling is of no consequence; the rhyme is in the sounds, not in the conversational signs by which the sounds are expressed. Thus *no* rhymes to *so*, but not to *do*, which rhymes to *two* or *too*; *great* rhymes to *hate* but not to *heat*, which last rhymes to *fleet*, and so forth. If the sounds of the last vowels, or of any of the following consonants, differ in any degree, however small, the rhyme is so far imperfect; thus *love* and *move* form an imperfect rhyme, the sound of the *o* in *love* being not only shorter than that of the *o* in *move*, but also to a certain extent different. These monosyllable or last syllable rhymes are called male rhymes.

Another class of rhymes is formed from words in which the accent is on the last syllable but one. In this class it is requisite that the sounds of the last vowel in the last syllable but one, and of all the following letters, should be the same as those with which they rhyme. Thus *desiring* and *respiring*, *descended* and *extended*, are perfect rhymes of this class. They are called female rhymes.

* *Hymni Ecclesiæ*. Edited by J. H. Newman, D.D., Macmillans. The most extreme Protestant, if a cultivated man, must, I suppose, admit the frequent charm of these effusions of earlier piety—if mixed with much which many of us reject. From a literary stand point, many of them are exquisite.

The principle of rhyming once understood, the application is easy in all cases. Thus, if the accent is on the last syllable but two, the sound of the last vowel of the last syllable but two, and of all the following letters must be the same. Thus *sensible* and *extensible* are perfect rhymes of this class, but *dissolute* and *resolute* are imperfect rhymes, the vowels in the last syllable but two of both words having different sounds.

The same principle of rhyming applies to all the modern languages, as well as to the English. Imperfect rhymes are more or less frequently used in all of them according to circumstances. The English and German languages, which abound in consonants, and have for the most part consonant terminations, are more deficient in rhymes than the Italian and Spanish which abound in vowels, and have for the most part vowel terminations.*

Fastidious critics occasionally affect to be especially hard when their penetration has once discerned an imperfect rhyme. But an occasional imperfect rhyme is an imperative necessity, since there are not adequate rhymes to be found for all the needs of poetic expression. Accordingly Pope, Byron, Sir Walter Scott, and very notably Mr. Swinburne, have all on occasions employed imperfect rhymes. They could do nothing else. A critic oddly enough once spoke to me with silly severity on a rugged rhyme he had met with in the early production of a friend of mine, and when I at once threw at him the great names I have mentioned, he coolly remarked that what was tolerable in an acknowledged poet, was not to be granted to young and struggling one. In other words, we must tolerate in a "swell"

* This short general statement, at once lucid and condensed, I have selected from the English cyclopædia, London' 1861, vol. VII. p. 78. The last clause of the little paragraph requires, however, in my judgment, some modification. In a certain sense, and that by no means the highest of its kind, the Italian and Spanish may be more facile languages for a poet's purpose. But they are immeasurably inferior, as languages, for the purposes of the poet or orator, to the English, which has a variety, a copiousness, and above all, a majesty in which those languages are deficient. As languages Greek stands first, English second, in the estimation of so very competent a critic as the late Lord Macaulay (History of England, vol. I. chapter 1), and of Greek, Theodore Parker declared that it was "the language that Jove himself might speak."

what we must sternly punish in a scavenger; it is saying the same thing. Unfortunately in all society there is, as Hamlet says "something too much of this, Horatio." But in Letters and in Morals, it ought manifestly to be otherwise. Literature is most correctly *supposed* to be based on virtuous Republican principles; and I say this—though politically I am most decidedly a Monarchist.

De Quincey, who seems to have entertained a sort of mortal grudge against the fame and memory of Pope, sets himself to "show up" the occasional incorrectnesses of that poet, usually held to be the most correct. And then one day—for mere circumspect worldlings are ever hard on the observations of men of letters—a fellow came down heavily on De Quincey, with his private vice about opium, and the many sixpences he would at times borrow in order to obtain the evil drug. It is easy to kick a dead lion. It is easy to be hard on departed genius. But it is not generous; it is not manly. The Prince of English prose remains a prince, notwithstanding his sad foible, and remaining a rare scholar too, and a noble gentleman. Not, of course, that De Quincey descended on Pope in so mean a manner; he was too well bred for that. But he seems to have sought out, with a sort of malignant pleasure, the presumed weak points of Pope as an author. By the way, as Tom Hood pertinently remarks, when Pope rhymed line and join, and obey and tea, it was the fashion to pronounce join as jine, and tea as tay.*

And Mr. Rosetti, one of the "advanced" school, has thought proper to rhyme the word *wet* with the name of our London thoroughfare, *Haymarket*; a somewhat violent proceeding surely, and one at least which can hardly be paralleled out of our elder poets. Such a rhyme is more than imperfect; it is,

* French *thé*. The swells of our regency, and still, as I have been informed, a leading Whig peer, were accustomed to pronounce oblige as obleege. Always the difference of a few years effects some changes in the current pronunciation, Dryden would talk of sperrit for spirit; and so *now* will some bibulous old Irishman calling for his *quietus* of Geneva. The vulgar ever retain longer older manners.

in the strict sense of the word, no rhyme at all. But I must be allowed to say that it ill becomes the admirers of W. Whitman to speak slightly of the rhymes of any poet that ever existed—whether of his verses or of his sentiment.

Here are a few specimens of rhymes :

ANCE—Chance, dance, glance, lance, trance, prance, romance, advance, mischance, countenance, *etc.*

ARVE—Carve, starve.

ED—Bed, bled, fed, fled, bred, red, shred, shed, sped, inbred, misled, said, bread, dread, dead, head, lead, read, spread, thread, tread, behead, overspread, and the preterites and participles of verbs which, when the final *ed* is pronounced, have their accent on the antepenultimate.

It must always be borne in mind that it is the accented syllables are to rhyme. It is the violation of this rule which makes “wet” and “Haymarket” incorrect as rhymes. People do not accent the last syllable when they pronounce the name of that street.

In strict rhyming the sounds, as already stated, should entirely correspond. This of course cannot always be done; but, by the needs of language and the constant example and practice of all our poets, we grant, as has already been pointed out, a reasonable degree of toleration. Of course there are degrees in imperfection of rhyme; a rhyme is more or less perfect, sometimes so very imperfect that it cannot by any stretch of courtesy or exercise of charity be denominated a rhyme at all. A faint resemblance, manifest enough to the ear to be a resemble, and yet not sufficiently perfect to be called a rhyme, is usually designated *Assonance*. Here is an example:—

Then come ere a minute's gone,
For the long summer's day
Puts its wings, swift as *linnets on*,
For flying away.

“Approximate rhymes” (this is Dr. Latham's definition) wherein the vowels only, or the consonants only, or vowels and consonants coincide, are called *Assonances*.

For example, the following is assonant, being, however, Irish rather than English:—

Oh, the groves of blarney,
 They are so charming,
 All by the purling of soft silent brooks;
 With banks of roses
 That spontaneously grow there
 All standing in order by the sweet rock close

In the Spanish and Scandinavian literature assonant metres are important, numerous, and prominent.

Bysshe, the earliest writer of a guide to verse for young beginners, warns off the sacred ground of Parnassus all men who are not naturally qualified to be poets. And his words, so quaintly expressed, are perfectly appropriate now. Concerning poetasters, or mere versifiers, he thus expresses himself:—"Such debasers of rhyme, and dabblers in poetry, would do well to consider that a man would justly deserve a higher esteem in the world by being a good mason or shoemaker, than by being an indifferent or second-rate poet." Furthermore, with touching modesty, he adds: "I pretend not by the following sheets to teach a man to be a poet in spite of fate and nature." Bysshe's work, a literary curiosity, which contains rules, an anthology, and various thoughts, bears date 1702.

We may also once for all concerning such guides avoid them—at least for regular use. If a man understands the nature of rhyme, and has a musical ear, he can never require their aid; and they only serve to delude the unfortunate versifiers. Of course they may contain useful suggestions—which is likely enough—and may be well worth a general perusal. But that certainly is all. *Poeta nascitur*, &c., as the old Roman lyricist wisely remarked.

Thus far we have attempted to traverse the leading matters that could be useful or interesting to students of the poetic art. Much more might certainly have been said; but we have essayed to go, with more or less fulness of detail and exposition, over the ground specified by the title. If our reader is a born

poet, we would fondly believe that the few stray hints, suggestions, criticisms, and references, may prove fertile to some good purpose, and may, in any doubtful moment, set him on the right track.

And the great thing of all is the study of our best poets, not for mere imitation, for each man has his proper gift, and if he has no gift he has no business—as old Bysshe sagely intimates—within the poetic enclosure. An imitator is not a poet. A mere echo of a great man, as we have more than once insisted in the present series, exaggerates his defects or his faults, while carefully avoiding, by virtue of sheer necessity, any possible exhibition of his incommunicable genius. But to drink into the spirit of poetry we cannot do better than to go to the great masters of this divine art. Addison, according to Johnson (following the Horatian advice on a similar subject) ought to be read day and night, patiently and thoroughly studied, by all who would attain a good English style. So of Milton, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, Coleridge, Walter Scott—to name men in the first rank only. Study them day and night, and we may confidently say that even the midnight oil will not be wasted.

Milton is the sublime, majestic, but withal, narrow concentrated, self-sufficing poet of sacred and sublime subject; Shakespeare the most many-sided (to use a German mode of expression) of all our writers—he, in the language of Johnson, exhausted worlds, and then imagined new; Wordsworth, the very poet of nature and rustic life, in whose pages the Cumberland hills, and lakes, and rustics appear before us with a vividness of its kind not equalled by any other poet; Shelley, the most musical, as many think, of all our bards, the most erratic, the most unapproachable; Byron also, many-sided, and in many respects, speaking generally, our greatest national poet; Coleridge, whom Mr. Swinburne reverences as one of the foremost among foremost bards; and Walter Scott—unequalled and unapproachable as the poet of martial strife and feudal chivalry, the Caledonian representative, in no mean or unworthy sense, of the sunny old Ionian Homer.

To the state of poetry, as at present existing in this country, we may briefly address a few concluding words. The subject is a large one, and can only here be generally indicated. There are, as Hume has acutely observed, revolutions in opinion, taste, criticism, resembling the revolutions of a wheel. Not the least curious is that suggested by the prevalent poetic school now to be found among us, or at least among its younger, ardent, and more advanced members and representatives. Pope, who occupied the poetical dictatorship during the greater part of the last century—as Johnson reigned undisputed the current model of fashionable prose—fell from his high position; and few, save men of letters and liberal readers, devote an hour to the fine poet of Twickenham. For a time Sir Walter Scott and Byron, with their fine, vigorous, bounding verse, full of poetry, and destitute of obscurity, ruled, and then the Lakers, a sort of sect among themselves, never becoming exactly popular. It is thus that Byron expresses himself on his succeeding Scott in the poetic supremacy of the day:—

“In twice ten years, the greatest living poet,
Like to the champion in the fistic ring,
Is called on to support his claim and show it,
Although to an imaginary thing.”

And now we have Tennyson, whose inspiration, in fact cognate with that of Wordsworth, has also a special element of its own; Tennyson is the most generally popular poet of the hour. His verses contain occasional realism, and this is exaggerated in quite another way in the harsh obscurity which too frequently pervades Browning. And then we have what may be called the advanced school, with Mr. Swinburne, the Rosetti's and their multitudinous followers of young men. These follow the gospel of art, they reject an infinite personal god, go beyond Shelley, and worship the Creaturely—and rave in strange terms about the body and all that is bounded by sense, and this world as the chief or only excellence. Beyond pictures, statues, the beautiful in the human form—all is dead, dark, and all is desponding. There is no god (none that we wot of

and we know not of immortality. Let us do as we please; since to-morrow we die. The versification of the leader of this school is splendid, nor would he always follow his disciples into their daring and impious flights or descents. This school, brilliant at times, is at issue with all humanity, and it cannot become popular, cannot last, except as a curious vestige of what brilliant, yet withal terrible, things a few clever men and young Oxford undergraduates used to think and sing and shriek in the year of grace, 1877.*

T. H. GIBSON.

SONG.

Shine on my course, sweet star,
 As o'er the deep afar
 I hail thy hopeful gleaming!
 Beacon of hope, thou art
 Unto my storm-tost heart,
 Still of thee fondly dreaming!

Thy sparkling eyes demure peep out
 From 'neath their arch—thy polished brow—
 Thy lips wreathed in a pretty pout,
 Like newly-budding roses shew!
 And when on me thou bend'st those eyes
 Which never may resisted be,
 My failing heart within me dies,
 And, dying—turns itself to thee!

Shine on my course, sweet star,
 As o'er the deep afar
 I hail thy hopeful gleaming!
 Beacon of hope thou art
 Unto my storm-tost heart,
 Still of thee fondly dreaming!

JULIAN FOWLER.

* The London Hermit has, in the Dublin University Magazine, capitally parodied the special eccentricities of our living poets.

THE HAWTHORN SPRAY.

Enraptured with the beauties which
Bright Spring spreads o'er the land,
A little maiden and a boy
Are walking hand in hand.

In gladsome tones they gaily talk,
Nor think of coming care;
The proud boy plucks a hawthorn bud
To deck the girl's fair hair.

"Now let this spray a token be,"
He merrily exclaims,
That in the years to come, we know
Nought else, save mutual aims.

For spotless 'tis; a symbol meet
Of this our treaty pure;
So may our compact bring us bliss,
And evermore endure.

* * * * *

Now many years have wearily
And slowly sped away,
But still these two are true of heart,
As on that dear dead day.

And so together oft again
Amid the spring-tide's glow
They walk, rememb'ring thankfully,
Their love-pledge long ago.

A pledge which did not prove in vain,
And never once was slighted;
For after tedious years of toil,
In joy they are united.

H. T. MACKENZIE BELL.

THE SAILOR'S DREAM.

Pacing the deck this wintry night
When the wind is hissing thro' shroud and stay,
When the heaven's are black, but the sea is white
With storm toss'd feathery flecks of spray ;
When the cold is bitterly biting keen,
And all ice cased is each spar and boom,
When no voice is heard, and no friend is seen—
I dream of the dear ones left at home.

I think of my wife as I saw her last,
And feel her sweet kisses upon my cheek,
As her loving arms round my neck she cast,
And gazed in my eyes—but did not speak.
I think of my children clustering round,
Knowing the parting too soon must come,
Till mingling anew with the winds harsh sound
Come the *voices* of dear ones left at home.

And fast as the vessel is driving on,
Still faster ahead my spirit flees,
In fancy the voyage is past and gone,
And no more I traverse the mighty seas ;
I picture myself, retired and grey,
No longer a wanderer and alone,
But peacefully ending life's fleeting day
In the midst of the dear ones left at home.

LOUIS CECIL.

TWILIGHT DREAMS.

When twilight's tender shadows fall
Around the dying day,
How oft fond memories recall
Forms long since pass'd away !

Voices long silent greet mine ear
In murmurs softly sweet,
Long vanish'd smiles again appear
My sadden'd eyes to greet.

Fair fingers seem mine own to press
As fondly as of yore,
The whisper'd vow, the soft caress
Seem mine, e'en mine once more.

The love-lit beams from Southern eyes,
Which once thrill'd through my breast,
Fall o'er me now and wake the sighs,
Which honour aye repress.

False friends seem true, my sainted dead
Return to bless my sight;
But ah! too soon these forms are fled,
My visions quench'd in night.

Yet when these roseate dreams are pass'd,
As I tread life's dreary maze,
They o'er me still a radiance cast
"The light of other days!"

J. C.

A DIRGE FOR DARK DAYS.

From the leaden sky the snowflakes fall
Like the tears from aged eyes;
The bare trees wave like a funeral pall
Bent by the wind's sad sighs.

The weird gusts seem, with their sobbing wail,
The cry of a soul unblest,
Far away from the reach of mercy's pale,
Emblem of sore unrest.

All Nature is dead, nor life nor sound
Is heard on the silent plain,
Save the noiseless drip on the sodden ground
Of driving sleet and rain.

But earth will wake from her deathlike sleep
To a glad and joyous spring;
Green leaves will unfold, and violets peep;
The lark and throstle sing.

She will bloom once more in budding youth
Embraced by the soft south wind;
The sun will return with a lover's truth,
Leaving all gloom behind.

His kiss will fall on her blushing cheek
With love's first passion again;
And the azure sky through the clouds will speak
Of sunshine after rain.

Oh! Nature, canst thou not lay the charm
Of life thus ever renewed,
On withering brow and faltering arm,
By age and ills subdued?

Canst thou not strike with a burning brand
The pulse's lingering beat,
To thrill again at the touch of a hand
With love's forgotten heat?

The fairy future draws nigh, and fades;
The present becomes the past;
And the morning wears into night's dim shades—
The ending comes at last.

Our youth once gone, with its golden gleams,
Returneth again no more;
Love and gladness come back only in dreams
To wake and find them o'er.

Oh, Youth! with rose leaves strewing thy track,
 Thy freedom from life's dull years,
 All looking forward, and no looking back—
 Soft April rain thy tears!

Is there naught to fill thy vacant place—
 To cheer our lengthening day,
 As we see thee vanish in Time's vast space,
 And slowly glide away?

Or shall we wake in a brighter sphere
 Clad in the glorious robe
 Of immortalised youth; decay and sere
 Left on this earthly globe?

Will our later years fall off like dross
 At sight of the golden gate;
 God-like and divine shall we reach the cross?
 I cannot tell—I wait.

MRS. GILBERT DISTIN.

R. H. HORNE'S COSMO DE'MEDICI.*

BY JOHN WATSON DALBY.

Combining the sagacity of the scholar with the intuition of the true poet, Mr. Horne, forty years ago, made a felicitous choice of Cosmo De'Medici, as a subject for an historical tragedy. He had, previous to the publication of his tragedy in 1836, written an essay (originally intended by him to form the main portion of a preface to the tragedy itself), giving an animated picture of the character, conduct, and career of his hero. In that narrative he successfully defended Cosmo from the charges brought against him by M. de Lismondi: showed the absurdity of M. de Lismondi's iteration of the term "usurper"; proved the increase of commerce, and all kinds of

* Cosmo De'Medici—an Historical Tragedy; and other Poems, by Richard Hengist Horne, author of "Orion," &c., &c. London: George Rivers.

arts during the reign of Cosmo in Florence ; and adduced the admissions of the Tuscan Duke's contemporaries, and all historians, of Cosmo's learning and knowledge in arts, sciences, and literature, and his consummate sagacity and masterly skill in politics. Equally and consistently conspicuous was Cosmo's patronage of men of talent, learning, and genius. In the very height of the pressure and glory of this great work, Cosmo de' Medici was struck down by an overwhelming domestic calamity, from the effects of which he never recovered. In Mr. Horne's words, "the two princes, his second and third sons, Giovanni and Garcia, went out to hunt in a forest. They were separated from their companions—some quarrel occurred—forth flew their swords, according to the custom of the country—and the younger killed the elder." This is all that can be known of the matter, as there were no witnesses. The younger averred that the elder commenced the quarrel, and struck the first blow ; but he was not believed. The Duke, not choosing to surrender up his son to a public trial and execution, is thought, with a Roman severity of soul, to have put him to death with his own hand. It seems very probable ; but there is no proof. M. de Lismondi endeavours to "heighten," or rather to lower the scene, by translating it into the vulgar, saying, "We are assured that Cosmo revenged Giovanni by stabbing Garcia," and thinks proper to add that this was done "in the arms of his mother, who died of grief in consequence," quoting De Thou as his authority. De Thou says nothing like this, either in the spirit or the letter : he gives a very different version. But the circumstantial account rendered by De Thou is an equally startling specimen of what an "historian" can do when he has a mind suited to the occasion. He actually gives the speech that Cosmo made over his son before he slew him—although they were alone—and there is no proof that either the speech or the deed ever occurred. All other contemporaries affirm that the Princes died of a pestilence, as the Duke himself gave out. The speech, however, invented by De Thou, is very fine, and has been literally rendered in the fifth act of the tragedy : therefore," adds Mr. Horne, "the difference between dramatic

and historical authenticity is not always quite so apparent, when closely examined, as generally imagined."

The force of the above remark will be felt by all readers of Mr. Horne's brilliant and intense version of the story. For *his* is unquestionably *the* authentic version—on his own dictum—that "all fictions, constructed upon principles of nature, have actually occurred." And in the tragedy all natural emotions are in full and solemn activity, including the stern Roman nature of the desolated father.

All lovers of dramatic literature will thank Mr. Horne for re-publishing, after a lapse of forty years, his fine tragedy—carefully revised, enlarged, and almost entirely remodelled as it is. Whether it is wise thus largely to alter what has been stamped with public approval is an open question; for ourselves we prefer "original tests," though, as in this case, the author has thought differently. We are bound to admit that Mr. Horne has not, like his great contemporaries, Browning and Tennyson, been of those who—

"Add and alter many times
Till all be ripe and rotten."

It is obvious that in our space no justice can be done to the plot of this magnificent drama, or to the personages who figure in it. It must suffice to say that the cue is carried on with that unintervening "action" which characterises all Mr. Horne's dramatic efforts; and that the others live, and move, and have their being at the hands of a consummate "Creator." Diversities of character are delicately discriminated, particularly in the two brothers, around whom the fatal catastrophic net is woven; and we know of nothing in the whole range of dramatic literature grander in conception, or more soul-inspiring in execution, than the closing scenes. We might, had we room, fill page after page with encomiums of the pathos, power, and surpassing poetry of the tragedy; and our extracts would justify the warmest praise. Very skilfully the play opens with Luigi del Passato, a sculptor, seated among some statues, and congratulating himself on forgetting the fatigue of limbs, length of journey, and grievous lack of means, among

the works of art. To him enter Cornelia and Dalmasso, cavaliers of St. Stephen. The latter encourages Del Passato's hope of patronage by the Duke ; and the opportunity is taken by both cavaliers of dilating on the fine acquirements, sweet demeanour, and virtues of that Prince. By a natural transition they pass to a description of the brothers, and contrast their characters : the one studious and aiming at some great destiny ; the other

“Unapt, opposed to all instruction ;
Hating to learn, yet anxious to be taught ;
Wishing to know by inspiration.”

Garcia enters ; a significant and strongly indicative colloquy takes place between them, ending with Garcia's assurance to the sculptor that he shall be his tutor and his friend. Giovanni enters, observes the sudden intimacy between his brother and the sculptor—“found in the street—the friend of half an hour!”—A quarrel ensues in which the native nobility of Garcia's disposition is shown in fiery high-minded sentences. Garcia and Passato leave the scene. The Duchess of Ippolita (the Duke's daughter by adoption) enters to Giovanni, and urges reconciliation with his brother. The advice is strengthened by Giovanni's love for Ippolita, and he agrees to “join this idle hunt with Garcia in the woods.” We know the fatal termination of this hunt. The second scene which is very finely imagined brings before us Cosmo and his librarian, Chiortro. The latter holds an open book, and exclaims,—

“The grandeur of antiquity uplifts
Each soul, whose natural energies expand
In space sufficient for its by-gone worlds.
Greece in its infancy, and unborn Rome,
Traced through their glorious rise and branchings vast
As though we'd watched seeds set in paradise
Take root, and then inherit all the sun ;
Breed thoughts and visions, such as Time himself
Might pause remorseful o'er his scythe, to scan.”

Chiortro is desired to summon Giovanni, to whom the Duke unfolds his project of uniting him to the daughter of the

Imperial Ferdinand. Devoted to Ippolita, this suggested marriage is abhorrent to the soul of Giovanni who considers himself thereby "crowned with iron wretchedness—throned on despair!" But Garcia also loves Ippolita, and it is the introduction of her name in the quarrel in the forest, which hurries the dispute to its fatal conclusion.

Full of suggestion, profoundly thoughtful, and including a splendid piece of prose composition—a poor scholar reading to the Duke from a manuscript a passage describing the death of Sisortin—the grand act shews us Cosmo justifying to himself the despotism which has "rolled the old Republic a ball within his hand."—But we are pausing insensibly on the very threshold of a tragedy which we trust our readers will see *acted* before their eyes—for such is the effect of a perusal of the living passionate productions of Mr. Horne's dramatic genius. Having far outstripped our limits, we must confine ourselves to quoting from many marked passages of equal grandeur, Cosmo's soliloquy after a despairing colloquy with the sculptor, Passato :

"I love myself : what wonder, having lost
 So much that's better ? I have outlived my years
 On the grey slope of life, when friends fall off,
And e'en the fresh flowers and the clouds look old ;
 When natural sweets are bitter in the mind,
Hope dying of sick memory soon as born,
 And beauty like a lily's pure cold urn
 Standing in Lethe's waters, wakes no sense
 To ravishment, no thoughts to urge our steps ;
 While grief, experience, and oblivion,
 In sequence old, come to dismiss the heart ;
Mighty revealings of an after state ;
Flit through the brain, and sobbings fill the ear,
From the great wind's quadruple origin,
 And make man fear himself. But justice reigns !
 Creation and destruction are the extremes
 With all the heavens for centre. Still we shudder :
 Yet one power holds. Unwavering consciousness
 Of general practice in humanity,

Is all that shores up against the eye
 Of deep self-scrutiny ; the only power
 Which can enable man, howe'er appall'd,
 To look his own being steadily in the face."

We close with the speech to which reference has already been made,—that of Cosmo, when about to slay his son :—

"Thou constant God ! sanction, impel direct
 The sword of justice !—and for a criminal son
 The pardon grant which his most wretched father
 Thus in the hour of agony implores."

The "*Poet's Magazine*" would be untrue to itself, and forgetful of its *raiteurs-d'otri*, if after seeing the curtain fall on the magnificent Drama of "*Cosmo de' Medici*," it did not invite the spectators to stay and witness the *after pieces*. The plots of these are well conceived, the characters cleverly cast ; and the actors deliver themselves with vivacity, energy, and feeling. But dropping metaphor, the "other poems" in this handsome volume are well deserving of the honourable place they occupy. Some of them make their first appearance in public, others have been read and admired in "*Household Words*," and other first-class periodicals ; and all are deserving of being thus brought together. Readers of Mr. Horne's works do not need to be reminded how "he runs through each mode of the lyre and is master of all ;" and others will find in even this small collection of his verses how thoroughly he commands the lyrical and the narrative.

In "*Household Words*" was first published "*Arctic Heroes, a fragment of Naval History*." The phantom of a sea-king rises over Eirek's-fjord, and standing on an invisible peak of ice, "through the dense fog, bleak wind and frozen mist," speaks, "albeit none else in those void solitudes his phantom voice will hear"—

"But to the constellations, and those stars
 That served as separate or correlative signs,
 I do recall my bodily presence here,
 Amid'st these Arctic powers and mysteries,

A thousand years before Mount Skapta's fiend
 Disgorged his fire-founts with their lava streams,
 That swept off Iceland's flocks, herds, thriving homes,
 Dried rivers up, destroyed grass, grain and fish,
 And brought a deadly famine on the isle.
 I do recall my bodily presence here,—
 Long ere the necromantia needle's law
 Gave power to man ;—and with no other guides
 Than flights of birds, but chief the raven's wing,
 Pryene of deer, white foxes, walrus, bears,
 Memory of land-marks, currents, lights in heaven—
 First, shifting, ghastly splendour of all hues,
 But more than all the impulse from within,
 The Scandinavian spirit of the clime,
 That sent us forth to conquest, plunder, fame ! ”

The phantom of the “ only son of Thorwald, Norway's chief,” the “ red-handed Eirek ” vanishes back to “ sleep for ever in his cathedral monument of ice.” The scene which follows is a stupendous region of icebergs and snow, and the personages introduced upon it are Sir John Franklin and his First Lieutenant. Very finely painted is the struggle of Franklin's to cheer the drooping spirits of his Lieutenant ; very manly his concluding words :—

—“ If too late, one noble task remains,
 And one consoling thought : we, to the last,
 With firmness, order, and considerate care,
 Will act as though our death-bed were at home,
 Gray heads with honour sinking to the tomb ;
 So future ages shall record that we,
 Imprisoned in these frozen horrors, held
 Our sense of duty, both to man and God.”

The suggestive beauty and exquisite music of the following poem warrant the transcription of the whole :—here is the essence of all that has ever been said, or sung, or sighed over the struggles and the fate of genius. It is termed the “ Gulf of Florida.”

Far out at sea—the sun was high,
 While veer'd the wind, and flapp'd the sail—
 We saw a snow-white butterfly
 Dancing before the fitful gale,

Far out at sea !

The little wanderer, who had lost
 His way, of danger nothing knew ;
 Settled awhile upon the mast,—
 Then flutter'd o'er the waters blue,

Far out at sea !

Above there gleamed the boundless sky ;
 Beneath the boundless ocean sheen ;
 Between them danced the butterfly,
 The spirit-life of this vast scene ;—

Far out at sea !

The tiny soul then soar'd away,
 Seeking the clouds on fragile wings,
 Lured by the brighter, purer ray
 Which hope's ecstatic morning brings,

Far out at sea.

Away he sped with shimmering glee !
 Scarce seen—now lost—yet onward borne !
 Night comes !—with wind and rain—and he
 No more will dance before the morn,

Far out at sea.

He dies, unlike his mates, I ween ;
 Perhaps not sooner, or worse cross'd,—
 And he hath felt, thought, known, and seen
 A larger life and hope—though lost

Far out at sea !

It is small dispraise to say that in two dozen small poems some are of unequal merit, but not one is without deep thought or deficient in powerful expression—indeed Mr. Horne is as acute in the one as he is direct and emphatic in the other. How characteristic of Newton are his words,—

“The earth was but a platform for thy power,
Whereon to watch and work by day and night;
The moon to thee was but heaven's evening flower;
The sun a loftier argument of light.”

The most remarkable of these poems, is, to our minds, “Jacob Van Dort; or, the Modern Sadducee.” Jacob Van Dort, “though at the synagogue, 'midst holy men, devoutly he has ever knelt and stood,”—when, at ninety, he is serenely dying, cannot help asking what he has done in his span of life,

“To look for life beyond the fate
Of worlds that have some final date?”

Questioning what immortality *is*, and describing it as a “dream so god-like and un-sane,” Jacob goes on to ask:

“What has the best man done—
What could the best that ever lived e'er do—
To justify a rank with star and sun?
Nay more—for they must end when dates fall due.”

No longer troubling himself with what he cannot comprehend, Jacob wisely reasons with himself:—

“Be rational, Van Dort—firmly resigned—
Die in thy senses!
Die as thou liv'dst, illusions all withstood,
And pious pretences.
Dying, you scarce can hold your health's strong mind;
But some of it keep clear:
Be trustful of the power which brought you here
That your “hereafter” will be good,
And last as long as nature meant it should.
Whate'er the future bring to thee,
Be grateful for all good thou hast enjoy'd—
Oh, deeply grateful if security
From bodily pain and weakness has been thine;
No faculties destroyed—
Worn dull, or cloyed,
While silver age did o'er thee smile and shine.

Write on my tomb
 In golden letters, but of simplest sort—
 'Jacob Van Dort,
 Contented—grateful—whatsoever may come.'”

Were the capacity of our columns equal to the extent of our admiration and desire, there are more of these poems which we would gladly lay before our readers: we must content ourselves with earnestly recommending that they search the mine for themselves,—sure of a rich reward.

STREWN ASHES.

BY ALFRED HARBLON.

“THE SONG OF THE SWALLOWS.”

Onward from land to land,
 Meadow and yellow sand,
 Mountain and ocean strand,
 Ever on wing;
 Faring from shore to shore,
 Seeking for evermore,
 She, whom our songs adore,
 Following spring!

Over the ocean's breast,
 Finding a fearful rest,
 Out on some stormy crest
 Where the waves cling;
 Waiting for time of grace,
 When we shall see her face,
 Stay from our weary race,
 Following spring!

How shall we trace her name?
 All the world holds her fame,
 Is she the ever-same,
 She whom we sing?

Nay, she abides a day,
Changes and fades away,
We must not rest or stay,
Following spring!

Mother and maid of love,
Dawn of the hope above,
Far-fleeing, fearful dove
Rest from the wing.
Give to our weary sight,
Glory and radiance bright,
Grant us thy help this night,
Following spring!

Dipping in ocean spray,
Winging our weary way,
Ever through night and day,
Faltering to fling,
Perfume of eglantine,
Crystals of gathered brine,
That in our pinions shine,
Following spring!

Mother, O mother mine,
Bountiful and divine,
When shall we to thy shrine
Sacrifice bring?
When shall we rest awhile,
Where shall we find the isle,
Whence we have fled ere while,
Following spring?

Where never sun goes down,
Where never autumn brown
Raises the winter's crown,
Winter the king.
Where we shall sleep, and see
Joy, after misery,
Raising in mead and lea,
Anthems to spring.

Land of the golden light,
 Vision of dreamer's sight,
 Land where the day and night,
 Run not in ring !
 Here, for the weary, rest,
 Hope, to the sad, confessed,
 Land of the ever blessed,
 Island of spring.

VIGIL.

Through the waking ways of time,
 Through the gates of olden ages ;
 From the every land and clime
 Rang the solemn song of sages :
 " Give us light ;
 " What is life, if light be hidden ?
 " Day, if sun-light be forbidden ?"
 Ask the night ;
 Whether, in her reign of sorrow,
 Does she see a brighter morrow
 Rising skyward to her sight ?
 Ask the starlight : doth it borrow
 From the sun-rays aught of sheen ?
 Ask the eagle doth it glean
 Far above the outer mountains,
 Sunrise falling on the fountains
 Through the boughs of broken green ?

Quoth the souran of the night :
 " Of the night is my quiescence ;
 " Shall I strain my weary sight
 " For a sign of my senescence ?"
 Said the stars :
 " When the night is old and hoary,
 " Then our reign is o'er—our glory
 " Day debars."

“Cried the Eagle: “Day is dawning
“From his distant tomb, and morning
“Scatters all the mists of wars.”

And the ages watch and pray
For the lark, and wait for day ;
For the rays upon the river,
Till there rise and leap, for ever,
Light and glory far away.

(Conclusion).

“ELLEN ADAIR.”

Up! and away, for the life-giving breezes,
Sweep o'er the mountain, and soft is the air,
Come from thy bower—the clock strikes the hour—
Mount thy proud steed, lithesome Ellen Adair.
Bright are thine eyes, glad child of the morning,
Flushed are thy cheeks as the dawn of the day ;
Thy mother is weeping ; thy father is sleeping ;
But Ellen cares nought as she gallops away.
A dark figure meets her—a gladdened face greets her—
A knight reineth close to the maiden so fair,
Soft words are spoken—but no sign or token
Is ever heard more of lost Ellen Adair.

MARION PITTARD.

DESIDERIUM.

As a wave that travels far
Under sun, and moon, and star,
Gathering speed, and depth, and strength,
Till it flings itself at length
Headlong on the rocky shore—
Sought with love the wide world o'er,
There with one last mad endeavour
Dies, and is no more for ever.

So would I, love, pass the sea
 With my bitter love for thee,
 Gaining ever depth and power,
 Waking fiercer hour by hour.
 And when East is changed to West,
 Falling on thy heartless breast,
 There with one last mad endeavour
 Die, and be no more for ever.

F. WYVILLE HOME.

MY IDEAL.

Fair hair in the wild wind blowing,
 Which the sun its glory throwing,
 Turns to waves of gold.
 Cheeks of purest pearly whiteness,
 With a slight rose tinge of brightness,
 Rose and lily blent.
 Deep blue eyes with love light shining,
 Round all hearts, their cords entwining,
 Captive lead at will.
 Fairy form, so slight and slender,
 Gladly might a monarch render
 Meed of praise to her.
 Such the ideal of my life dream,
 And to win her for my hearth queen,
 Is my fondest hope.

ARTHURESTINE.

NEW POEM BY JOHN MILTON.

We are requested by Mr. Blanchard to state, that the price of the poem notified in our last is 5s., and not 2s. 6d. as stated; and further, that as a limited number of the copies only are in circulation, it will be impossible to send numbers for review.

Review.

THE SPANISH ARMADA.

By W. H. WRIGHT.

This memorial poem relates in effective and stirring strains the story of England's most important naval victory. First in the great ocean drama, we have an "ancient mariner," tearing his way up from the sea-beach, with long strides; and a burthen of news. Here are the lines by which our attentions stands directed to him :

But who comes here, with breathless speed,
With scared and boding glance ?
He brings strange news, all list'ning heed,
And eye his looks askance ;
'Tis old Jack Fleming, rough and brown,
A pirate captain bold,
Who long hath borne a wild renown,
For quest of spoils and gold.

A moment, and we find this being face to front, with the great Lord Howard, telling the tidings he has brought in his bursting mouth. He has seen the "Invincible" Squadrons of Spain, of which he says :

"Full seven long miles, from wing to wing,
Their ships spread o'er the sea,
So straight the tidings I did bring
To port, my lord, for thee ;
And if in aught I wrong have done,
Bethink thee, good my lord,
What perils I this day have run,
And justice meet accord."

Now in rapid succession the Giants of these days come crowd-into the picture, herewith the "trusty Drake" we have "burly,

and grizzled, like Neptune, John Hawkins, the pride of Plymouth town ;" also Lord Sheffield, Sir Richard Grenville, Frobisher, and other notables, all fired with a strong martial spirit, and eager to face the foe.

"Come, drain a goblet," Hawkins cried,
 And pass the wine-cup round,
 May British pluck, whenever tried,
 Our boastful foes confound.
 Hurrah ! hurrah ! the Spaniard comes,
 He comes in proud array,
 Sound out the trumpets, beat the drums,
 Let's merry be to-day.

And again,

"Ring out the bells with lusty peals,
 Let all true hearts be gay,
 And he who aught of terror feels
 May stay at home and pray."

These brief extracts from the ninety verses, save one, are fair evidences of the general scope and style of the work, which as a lyrical ballad, is one of considerable merit. Descriptive poetry is very apt to become somewhat monotonous, but this is a serious fault that Mr. Wright has managed to avoid. We congratulate Mr. Wright upon his work, and shall hope to see other pieces from his pen.

THE LATE MORTIMER COLLINS.

We are sorry to hear that Mortimer Collins's sudden death left his widow totally unprovided for ; and are equally glad to learn that a fund is being raised for the benefit of that lady. Mr. S. R. Townshend Mayer, of Richmond, Surrey, is the Treasurer, and among the contributors are the Earl of Derby, Ex-Lord Mayor Cotton, Lord Mayor White, Earl Beauchamp,

Mr. Edmund Yates, editor of the *World*, J. F. Waller, Esq., LL.D., Mr. R. D. Blackmore, author of "Lorna Doone," &c., the Proprietors of *Punch*, Mr. Henry Frowde, Mr. Ellis J. Davis, late editor of *St. James's Magazine*, Mr. W. A. Gibbs, author of "Harold Erle" &c., Mrs. Crawshay, Sir C. W. Dilke, Bart. M.P., Mr. Frederick Locker, Sir Charles Trevelyan, Bart., K.C.B., the Company of Drapers, Dr. Piesse, Messrs. R. Bentley and Son, the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, &c., &c., about £200 has already been contributed. We understand that Mrs. Mortimer Collins, who has left Knowl Hill, and come to reside in London, is finishing her husband's novel "The Village Comedy," preparing a volume of his poems for the press, and writing a memoir of the last ten years of his life and literary friendships.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"Arthurestine.—Thanks for your favour. It is almost an impossibility to reply to all letters and criticise immediately—editors are only human after all. "The lover's reply" is a great improvement—our readers shall have the benefit of a few lines. In answer to the question why he loves his heart's mistress he says:—

"You are fairer in my eyes
Than them all, with all their beauty,
'Tis yourself—your mind I prize."

Persevere and give up seeking to find "excuses for depression."

Faith Chiltern.—See answer to Arthurestine.

L.L.B.—Your versification is good, but you lack originality. We fancy we have met your "hale and hearty" old gentleman before. Try again and do not be discouraged by our remarks, which are meant to assist and not deter young authors.

Esta.—We would advise you to read Shakespeare in addition to the works you mention. It is better to be thoroughly acquainted with English authors first, and afterwards, by all means, read the foreign poets. Study them in the original if possible.

M.M.K.—You greatly delude yourself in thinking that your productions are "very good." You require greater concentration of thought and power to convey your ideas musically, also a better knowledge of two simple branches of study—English grammar and spelling.

Bernado.—Novellettes will certainly be acceptable, and we shall be glad to peruse some of your M.S.S. Thanks for the poem, which shall appear shortly.

"Charming Spring," by W.—A pretty poem worthy a better title. We will use it if we may change its denomination.

William M.—(1) Certainly not. (2) We hardly feel competent to advise, not knowing your capabilities; if you submit the work for our perusal we will reply to your question.

Bertha.—Why say that you “almost despair?” There is no need for despondency for you have improved greatly. Byron’s first venture was cruelly criticised, Shelly was rated *mad*, therefore how can you hope to escape. Fling off the fetters of despondency, and even if you do not take, storm the citadel of Parnassus.

Gwendoline R.—A curious poem, was it written after a ball? We give our readers the benefit of one of the most extraordinary kisses we ever remember to have heard of:

“She, blushing, lifted up her eyes,
And to his lips upraised her own
Until they met, and close together grew
Into a love-bound juncture of delight.”

We could forgive the kiss, but we cannot accept the remainder of the poem. Try again, Miss Gwendoline, but don’t pilfer from “Ouida;” you must have read “In a winter city” very carefully.

Walter H.—No, we are not turning Republican just yet. Our mission is poetry, not politics, and so long as the rates are not increased and the country is quietly governed, a monarchy will meet our view sexactly.

“To a violet,” by Edgar.—By no means original, “The Bells” appears to be a plagiarism from Edgar Allen Poe, for the parts of the poem that are your own have evidently crept in by mistake.

Emma.—Translations from the Spanish would certainly be acceptable.

T. R. (Christiana, Denmark).—We were not aware that any of Hans C. Andersen’s works remained unpublished. If such be the case, we should of course gladly welcome any lines of his, however few.

“The Rose Queen,” (Liverpool).—Certainly we have been expecting to hear from you—it was quite unnecessary to ask—you owe us a long promised poem remember. We shall be glad to accept “The Rose Bud.” You seem particularly fond of roses, why is it?

Herbert (Penzance).—Thanks. Poems sent are a great improvement. We will use the song. Your “lover” is a most audacious young gentleman, but for the benefit of our bashful brethren we will quote one verse:—

“Closely to my heart I fold thee,
In my loving arms I hold thee,
Captive now, I, stooping, boldly
Kiss thy cheek.”—&c., &c.

Very praiseworthy, Mr. Herbert—provided the lady does not object.

“Eulegy (*sic*) on the Reading Room, British Museum.”—A most extraordinary production. We quote a verse for the benefit of our readers:—

“May God defeat those scheeming (*sic*) minds,
Evil bring unto them
Who Alexandria’s fate would bring
On our choice museum.”

Again,

“Long may thy massive walls outlast
The hand that yealds (*sic*) each pen.”—&c., &c.

After this we can only ejaculate, like Dominie Sampson, “Prodigious!”

Hilda.—Your neighbourhood must indeed be dreary, but we can hardly accept your statement unreservedly. You say: "there is nothing beautiful about here; no fields, no trees, and there can be no stimulus to poetry where nothing pretty is to be seen." It is very sad—but surely you possess a looking glass!

W. C. Bouchier.—Thanks. We will use the "Fleshly" song, which is really good. "Take no thought for the morrow" also shews signs of improvement, you say:—

"The labours of the buoyant spring
Have reached their end; the trees are crowned;
The song bird's brood have taken wing,
Their worn nest crumbles to the ground."

Is the last line strictly correct? We always thought that bird's nests lasted longer than till the beginning of summer. "The trees are crowned" is also a vague expression—what are they crowned with—foliage or nests? Apart from the points we notice, we like the poem.

J. S. Rough (Greenock).—Thanks. Your song is sad—but it is far above the average. We shall be happy to insert it at an early date.

Rodwell (Liverpool).—The "Stock jobber's connundrum" is, we fear, too true; it is not, however, quite the thing we want. We prefer original matter to parodies. You say:—

"Streets can scarce be always mending"

Is that quite correct? If we remember rightly Liverpool would prove an exception to that rule.

"Ye legend of Simpkins"—Clever—but not suitable for our pages—send stamp if you wish it returned.

Declined with thanks.—An eulogy—The old clock—Spring—A love song—Never more—Good night.

ERRATA.

Owing to a printer's error the pages of the August issue were wrongly numbered, Subscribers will kindly notice that page 65 commences the third volume.

In review of "Poems of the month," by M.A. Baines, August number, page 126, extract April, second line, for "Pray thou not too tearful" read "Pray be thou not too tearful."

August number, page 124, second line from bottom, for "mistresses" read "huntresses."

OUR EXCHANGE.

In deference to the wish of many of our Subscribers and Correspondents we have consented to devote a page of our magazine to the "wants" of our readers. Our Exchange will be limited to books, literary matters and music.

To defray costs a fee of sixpence will be charged for each notice, and to prevent loss to our correspondents each transaction must take place through our office in order that we may be assured of the *bonâ fides* of the writers.

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William M.—(1) Certainly not. (2) We hardly feel competent to advise, not knowing your capabilities; if you submit the work for our perusal we will reply to your question.

Bertha.—Why say that you “almost despair?” There is no need for despondency for you have improved greatly. Byron’s first venture was cruelly criticised, Shelly was rated *mad*, therefore how can you hope to escape. Fling off the fetters of despondency, and even if you do not take, storm the citadel of Parnassus.

Gwendoline R.—A curious poem, was it written after a ball? We give our readers the benefit of one of the most extraordinary kisses we ever remember to have heard of:

“She, blushing, lifted up her eyes,
And to his lips upraised her own
Until they met, and close together grew
Into a love-bound juncture of delight.”

We could forgive the kiss, but we cannot accept the remainder of the poem. Try again, Miss Gwendoline, but don’t pilfer from “Ouida;” you must have read “In a winter city” very carefully.

Walter H.—No, we are not turning Republican just yet. Our mission is poetry, not politics, and so long as the rates are not increased and the country is quietly governed, a monarchy will meet our view sexactly.

“To a violet,” by Edgar.—By no means original, “The Bells” appears to be a plagiarism from Edgar Allen Poe, for the parts of the poem that are your own have evidently crept in by mistake.

Emma.—Translations from the Spanish would certainly be acceptable.

T. R. (Christiana, Denmark).—We were not aware that any of Hans C. Andersen’s works remained unpublished. If such be the case, we should of course gladly welcome any lines of his, however few.

“The Rose Queen,” (Liverpool).—Certainly we have been expecting to hear from you—it was quite unnecessary to ask—you owe us a long promised poem remember. We shall be glad to accept “The Rose Bud.” You seem particularly fond of roses, why is it?

Herbert (Penzance).—Thanks. Poems sent are a great improvement. We will use the song. Your “lover” is a most audacious young gentleman, but for the benefit of our bashful brethren we will quote one verse:—

“Closely to my heart I fold thee,
In my loving arms I hold thee,
Captive now, I, stooping, boldly
Kiss thy cheek.”—&c., &c.

Very praiseworthy, Mr. Herbert—provided the lady does not object.

“Eulegy (*sic*) on the Reading Room, British Museum.”—A most extraordinary production. We quote a verse for the benefit of our readers:—

“May God defeat those scheeming (*sic*) minds,
Evil bring unto them
Who Alexandria’s fate would bring
On our choice museum.”

Again,

“Long may thy massive walls outlast
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Idèle desires a copy of a work entitled "Infelicia," believed to be by Ada Menkin, will exchange or purchase.

J.D. wishes a volume called "Beautiful Poetry," supposed to have been published about twenty years ago. Will give Vol. I. of the "Poet's Magazine" bound, in exchange, or purchase.

E.M.M. is willing to exchange complete works of Shakespeare, cheap edition strongly bound in cloth, for *Molière* or Dante's "*Inferno*."

J.E.M. requires the poetical works of Mortimer Collins, also the works of François Villon, state price required.

NOTICE.

In answer to the numerous enquiries Mr. Leonard Lloyd begs to inform the public that he is open to engagements, yearly, half-yearly, or quarterly, to give instruction in the art of poetical composition—both in the correction and criticism of M.S.S., and by letters of advice—privately by post.

TO OUR READERS.

While the proprietors are happy to receive contributions from unknown writers, they have—to prevent the Magazine sinking to the level of an amateur publication—made arrangements with various authors of note, who will, from time to time, furnish poems, and articles on poems and poetry. The main feature of THE POETS' MAGAZINE is to invite all who possess literary talent to contribute to its pages.

Original contributions only are acceptable.

No Manuscripts can be returned, except by special arrangements.

In all cases where written answers to letters are desired, a directed envelope and two stamps must be enclosed.

As we have so many letters asking for criticism on enclosures we find it necessary to state that any correspondent *who is not a Subscriber* to our Magazine, and desires criticism on MSS., either privately or in print, must enclose twelve stamps with each contribution. In all cases where this rule is complied with, a prompt and candid opinion will be given, and a copy of the current number of the Magazine forwarded post free.

This rule does not apply to established Authors, whose communications will at all times receive attention.

Novellettes, prose poems, and all articles of real literary value, are acceptable, and if suitable will be included in the Magazine.

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